

Hi my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and this is the 8<sup>th</sup> principle minute. With the adoption of the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle, our congregation committed to dismantle racism, beginning within our walls.

Environmental justice and racial justice are inextricably linked. Environmental degradation primarily impacts poor communities which are disproportionately BIPOC. The lack of political power in these communities has made them especially vulnerable to both corporate and governmental actions that harm the environment.

Whether the impact of climate change on indigenous communities that we discussed last week, the complete failure to protect the primarily black citizens of Detroit from lead poisoning, the imbalanced loss of life in hurricane Katrina, or fact that as a result of red-lining, “Black people are 40% more likely to live in areas with the largest projected increase in heat-related deaths...” due to climate change, we can see that the stories of environmental harm affecting humans involve more BIPOC than White victims. This is too widespread to be assumed to be coincidental or unintentional.

When we speak of racial justice and environmental justice, we must see them as inextricably linked. Those most affected by climate change and pollution must have a louder voice at the table. Their vote is their voice. Voter suppression is racially based. It prevents BIPOC communities from being fully engaged in the fight for environmental justice. Moreover, the historic focus of the environmental movement on abstract threats that appeal to wealthy donors both failed to address immediate needs of BIPOC communities and alienated a demographic that should have been obvious allies. Our service next week will feature Paula Cole Jones and will focus on this important topic.

Together we will continue this journey toward spiritual wholeness, build a beloved community, educate ourselves and discuss what it means to develop a culture of being accountably anti-racist. We will continue to look at our own practices, identity, and stories with a new lens to dismantle the racism in ourselves and our institutions.